

tree of knowledge

MEMORANDUM

Librarian of Congress

From the  
Division of Bibliography

Referring to: telephone request of Mr.

Jan. 29, 1937

Frederic Delano, Room 4046, Interior Department, Washington, D.C., for material on the early post riders in the days of the colonies; the "tree of knowledge" which was at the inter-section of roads from Plymouth to Duxbury (Mass.), said to have contained a post-box; and other information concerning these early mails, etc.

Bayles, W. Harrison. Postal service in the thirteen colonies. Journal of American history, 1911, v. 5, no. 3: 429-458.

Butler, Mrs. Ruth (Lapham) Doctor Franklin, postmaster general. Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, Doran & co., inc., 1928. 200 p. (Franklin monographs)  
Bibliography: p. 189-196.

Felt, Joseph Barlow. Post office department (1639-1775) (In Massachusetts Historical Society. Collections, ser. 3, vol. 7, p. 48-89. Boston, 1838)

Finlay, Hugh. Journal kept by Hugh Finlay, surveyor of the post roads on the continent of North America, during his survey of the post offices between Falmouth and Casco bay, in the province of Massachusetts, and Savannah, in Georgia; begun the 13th Sept., 1773 and ended 26th June 1774. Brooklyn, F.H.Norton, 1867. 94 p.

Fitzpatrick, John C. The post office of the revolutionary war. D. A. R. magazine, Oct. 1922, v. 56: 575-588.

Konwiser, Harry M. Colonial and revolutionary posts; a history of the American postal systems; colonial and revolutionary periods...Richmond, Va., Bibliography: p. 73.

Smith, William. The colonial post-office. American historical review, Jan. 1916, v. 21: 258-275.  
Has bibliographical footnotes.

----- The history of the post office in British North America, 1639-1870... Cambridge, (Eng.) The University press, 1920. 356 p.

(Woolley, Mary E.) Early history of the colonial post office. (In Rhode Island historical society. Studies in colonial history. Providence, 1894. no. III)  
Rhode Island historical society. Publications, 1893-94. new series, v. 1, p. 270-291.

We copy the following information from Justin Winsor's "History of the town of Duxbury, Massachusetts, with genealogical registers", (Boston, Crosby & Nichols, 1849, 360 p.), p. 12:

"A village in the upper part (of Duxbury) is called Tarkiln, or Chandlertown, and forms a school district. Here, at the junction of the road from Plymouth to Boston with the road from Duxbury, was the 'Tree of Knowledge', so called; and a box nailed to this was the depository for the Duxbury letters, many years ago, when a regular conveyance was established between Plymouth and Boston. Here the towns-people repaired to obtain their letters and papers, or some one was despatched to get them and distribute them. The mail was afterwards conveyed here to meet the Plymouth stage for Boston. And before the establishment of a direct mail between Duxbury and Boston, the Duxbury Mail was carried to Kingston, and there met the Plymouth. A guide-board is now standing on the place where the tree stood, bearing a representation of it."

From Henry A. Fish's "Duxbury, Massachusetts, ancient and modern; a sketch, with map and key", (Binghamton, N.Y., 1924) 17 p.), we extract the following information:

"... This route ended the 'Old Massachusetts Path' (further west), and in 1685, as described above, it was laid out as the 'Kings Highway', and remained so until about 1709, at which time the growing part of the Jones River settlement (then a part of Plymouth) required a more direct way of reaching Plymouth. The inhabitants of Duxbury were opposed to a change of route, and their objections were well supported until one dark night, when the old bridge, which had been widened, repaired and rebuilt, went up in smoke. This ended the road through John Roger's farm and resulted in the present route through Kingston Village, which joins the old Massachusetts Path at Tarkiln at the 'Tree of Knowledge', so named from the fact that on this tree was nailed the post box associated with the stage coach and tavern days". (p. 8)

"KEY TO THE NUMBERING OF THE MAP.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Former Occupant</u>	<u>Present Occupant</u>
149	Tree of Knowledge Col. Joshua Brewster	John Cooper 1923." (p. 16)

Respectfully submitted,

(signed) Anne L. Baden  
Acting Chief Bibliographer.